

Epichoristodes acerbella Walker (Lep.: Tortricidae):
first capture of the imago at large in Britain

By A. A. ALLEN *

On the night of 17th June 1979, I took an unfamiliar Tortricid moth in good but not absolutely fresh condition at rest on a fence close to a wall-lamp in a tree-lined by-way some ten minutes' walk from my house in the Blackheath direction. I failed to identify it from any available illustration, but an opportunity occurred recently of showing it to Dr. J. D. Bradley (part-author of the new work on British Tortricoid Moths), who at once recognised it as the above — an insect hitherto little known to our lepidopterists. He tells me that there is no other much like it, and that it had not previously been found in the wild in this country; but only as a casual importation in the larval stage, on various plants (carnations, etc.) from Africa. There is a short notice of the species in Bradley, Tremewan, & Smith (1973: 126), where it is placed between *Clepsis* and *Epiphyas* in the Tortricinae. As it may be that no description or figure exists in readily accessible British works I give a brief description, taken from my specimen, for purposes of recognition: —

Of about the size and shape of a small *Epinotia solandriana* L., but costa less arched; forewings noticeably narrow for a Tortricine, pale ochreous-buff, costally shaded with brown near base, more or less irregularly strewn with fuscous dots and specks; a fuscous-mixed fulvous blotch, in size about half width of wing, well defined above and inwardly, occupying the tornal area, extending outward in a point to base of termen, and inward as a narrow streak for some distance along hind margin. Hindwings pale shining whitish-brown. Palpi light fuscous, fore femora blackish above, legs otherwise pale. Patagia fulvescent in front, rest of body pale.

Along the base of the fence on which the moth was found, common garden plants such as iris and hollyhock were growing mixed with various 'weeds' (and probably likewise on the far side which was out of sight), but they throw no light on the presence of *E. acerbella* at the spot. It can hardly be expected that this native of the tropics could withstand the rigours and vagaries of our climate long enough to breed and establish itself permanently, except perhaps in hothouses and the like; yet, as larvae probably often get imported, the moth could well turn up again in the open from time to time. Further, since its range in Africa is evidently wide, it may prove a somewhat hardy and adaptable species.

I thank Dr. Bradley for identifying the specimen, and Lt.-Col. A. M. Emmet for his good offices in that connection.

Reference

- Bradley, J. D., Tremewan, W. G., & Smith, A., 1973. *British Tortricoid Moths — Cochylidae and Tortricidae: Tortricinae*. Ray Society, London.

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